

What is claimed is:

1. A method of receiving and handling an order from a customer using at least one computer, comprising the steps of:
  - receiving customer order information sent from the customer,
- 5 said customer order information including customer information regarding the customer and at least one of ordering information representing contents of an order for a commodity ordered by the customer and support request information representing contents of a support request;
- 10 performing the order reception processing based on the received customer order information;
  - determining to deliver the commodity specified in the ordering information
  - and to provide a support specified in the support information, based
- 15 on a result of the order reception processing;
  - confirming whether the commodity is delivered and the support is provided; and
  - charging a price of the commodity specified in the ordering information and a cost of the support specified in the support request
- 20 information, based on the customer information including information regarding a price of each commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of each support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by a seller of the commodity and support.
- 25 2. The method according to claim 1, further including the

steps of:

    checking whether there is a stock of the commodity specified in the ordering information based on stock information;

    determining a delivery date for delivering the ordered

5 commodity; and

    sending order-reception confirmation information including delivery-date information representing the determined delivery date and the customer order information to the customer either in a facsimile form or e-mail form.

10 3. The method according to claim 1, further including the steps of:

    storing, in a storage, Q&A information representing the contents of inquiries sent from the customer and the seller and the contents of responses to the inquiries, the inquiries regarding commodities to be

15 sold and supports to be provided; and

    providing the Q&A information stored in the storage, in response to a request.

4. The method according to claim 3, further including the steps of:

20 gathering statistical data based on the customer information and customer order information of each of a plurality of customers; and reflecting the statistical data to the Q&A information.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the support request information includes information regarding a 25 request for collecting recyclable items including at least one of a used

cartridge, a used toner container and used paper.

6. The method according to claim 5, further including the step of

arranging collection of used paper, in response to a support

5 request for collecting used paper from the customer when a used-paper collection box provided to the customer is filled with used paper.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the support request information includes information regarding a request for at 10 least one of:

a service for delivering the commodity to a place specified by the customer;

a service for unpacking the ordered commodity at a time of delivery;

15 a service for collecting an empty box that the customer does not need any more;

a service for delivering commodities that are repeatedly supplied to the customer on a FIFO basis;

20 a service for specifying a delivery date for delivering the commodity to be delivered;

a service for urgently delivering the ordered commodity; and

a service for periodically delivering a constant number of commodities specified by the customer.

8. The method according to claim 1, further including the 25 steps of:

storing, in a storage in response to a customer registration operation of the seller, the customer information including information regarding a price of a commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by 5 the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by the seller; and

creating a purchase application form and a catalog based on the stored customer information, and providing the customer with the created application form and catalog.

10 9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the customer order information is sent from the customer through a telephone call or via facsimile.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the customer order information is sent from the customer through Internet.

15 11. The method according to claim 10, further including the step of

storing, in a storage in response to a registration operation of the seller, the customer information including information regarding a price of a commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency 20 and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by the seller, and wherein the customer information includes information representing that the customer is one who transmits the customer order information through the Internet.

25 12. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the

steps of:

assigning, in a case where the customer has made a contract of maintenance service for one of a plurality of apparatus including OA apparatuses, a delivery of the commodity to a service person who can

5 execute the maintenance service when it is determined to deliver the commodity specified in the ordering information; and

determining to execute a maintenance service based on the maintenance contract at a time of delivering the commodity, based on the customer information and customer order information.

10 13. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

arranging delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information based on the customer order information, upon determination of the delivery of the commodity specified in the

15 ordering information and the providing of the support; and

instructing a distributor to perform a support when delivering the commodity, in a case where the support is specified in the customer order information.

14. The method according to claim 13, further including the 20 steps of:

confirming whether there is a stock of the ordered commodity based on stock information;

determining a delivery date for delivering the ordered commodity;

25 sending, to the customer, order-reception confirmation

- information including delivery-date information representing the determined delivery date and the customer order information in a facsimile form or e-mail form; and
- arranging the delivery of the ordered commodity based on the
- 5 delivery-date information and customer order information.
15. An order-reception system comprising:
- an order-reception subsystem which receives customer order information sent from a customer, wherein the customer order information includes customer information regarding the customer
- 10 and at least one of ordering information representing contents of an order for a commodity ordered by the customer and support request information representing contents of a support request;
- a business management subsystem which has a customer information database storing the customer information regarding a
- 15 price of a commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, and set by a seller; and
- an order-entry subsystem which executes an order-reception processing based on the customer order information received by said
- 20 order-reception subsystem,
- wherein said order-reception subsystem
- determines to deliver the commodity specified in the ordering information and to provide the support specified in the support information, based on a result of the order reception
- 25 processing,

confirms whether the ordered commodity is delivered and whether the support is provided; and

charging the price of the commodity and the cost of the support specified in the ordering information.

5 16. The system according to claim 15, wherein:

said order-entry subsystem confirms whether there is a stock of the commodity specified in the ordering information based on stock information, and determines a delivery date for delivering the ordered commodity; and

10 said order-reception subsystem sends order-reception confirmation information, including delivery-date information representing the determined delivery date and the customer order information, in a facsimile form or e-mail form.

15 17. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein said order-reception subsystem stores, in a storage, Q&A information representing the contents of inquiries sent from the customer and the seller and the contents of responses to the inquiries, the inquiries regarding commodities to be sold and supports to be provided, and provides the Q&A information stored in the storage in 20 response to a request therefor.

18. The order-reception system according to claim 17, wherein said business management subsystem gathers statistical data based on the customer information of each of a plurality of customers and the customer order information, and reflects the statistical data to 25 the Q&A information.

19. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein the support request information includes information representing a request for collecting recyclable items including at least one of a used toner cartridge, a used toner container and a used paper.
20. The order-reception system according to claim 19, wherein said delivery subsystem arranges collection of used paper, in response to a support request for collecting used paper from the customer when a used-paper collection box provided to the customer is filled with used paper.
21. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein the support request information includes information regarding a request for at least one of:
  - 15 a service for delivering the a commodity to a place specified by the customer;
  - 16 a service for unpacking the ordered commodity at a time of delivering the ordered commodity ordered;
  - 17 a service for collecting an empty box that the customer does not need any more;
  - 20 a service for delivering commodities which are repeatedly supplied to the customer on a FIFO basis;
  - 21 a service for specifying a delivery date for delivering the commodity to be delivered;
  - 22 a service for urgently delivering the ordered commodity; and
  - 25 a service for periodically delivering a constant number of

commodities specified by the customer.

22. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein said order-reception subsystem stores, in a storage in response to a registration operation of the seller, the customer information 5 including information regarding a price of a commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by the seller, creates a purchase application form and a catalogue based on the stored customer information, and provides the 10 customer with the created application form and catalogue.

23. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein said order-reception subsystem receives the customer order information from the customer through a telephone call or facsimile.

24. The order-reception system according to claim 15, further 15 including

a network-order-reception subsystem which receives the customer order information sent from the customer through Internet.

25. The order-reception system according to claim 24, wherein:

20 said order-reception subsystem stores, in a storage in response to a customer registration operation of the seller, the customer information including information regarding a price of commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the 25 price and the cost are set by the seller, and

wherein the customer information includes information representing that the customer is one who transmits the customer order information through the Internet.

26. The order-reception system according to claim 15, wherein  
5 said order-reception subsystem assigns a delivery of the ordered commodity to a service person who can execute a maintenance service when it is determined that the commodity specified in the ordering information is to be delivered, and determines to execute the maintenance service at a time of delivering the commodity based on  
10 the customer information and customer order information, in a case where the customer has made the contract of the maintenance service for one of a plurality of apparatus including OA apparatuses.

27. The order-reception system according to claim 15, further including  
15 a delivery subsystem which arranges delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information and to provide a support, and wherein said delivery subsystem arranges delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information based on the customer order information, upon determination of the delivery of the  
20 commodity and providing of the support by said delivery subsystem, and instructs a distributor to perform a support when delivering the commodity in a case where the support is specified in the customer order information.

28. The order-reception system according to claim 27, further  
25 including a stock database which manages stock information, and

wherein:

    said order-entry subsystem confirms whether there is a stock of a ordered commodity based on the stock information, and determines a delivery date for delivering the ordered commodity;

5      said order-reception subsystem sends order-reception confirmation information including both delivery-date information representing the determined delivery date and the customer order information in a facsimile form or e-mail form; and

    said delivery subsystem arranges the delivery based on the  
10 delivery-date information and the customer order information.

29. An order-reception system for receiving and handling an order from a customer using at least one computer, said system comprising:

    means for receiving customer order information sent from the  
15 customer, said customer order information including customer information regarding the customer and at least one of ordering information representing contents of an order for a commodity ordered by the customer and support request information representing contents of a support request;

20      means for performing the order reception processing based on the received customer order information

    means for determining to deliver the commodity specified in the ordering information and to provide a support specified in the support request information, based on a result of the order reception

25 processing;

means for confirming whether the commodity is delivered and the support is provided;

a customer-information database which stores the customer information including information regarding a price of a commodity

- 5 purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by a seller of the commodity and support; and

- means for charging a price of the commodity specified in the 10 ordering information and a cost of the support specified in the support request information based on the customer information.

30. The order-reception system according to claim 29, further including:

- means for confirming whether there is a stock of the commodity 15 specified in the ordering information, based on stock information; means for determining a delivery date for delivering the ordered commodity; and

- means for sending order-reception confirmation information including both delivery-date information representing the determined 20 delivery date and the customer order information, in a facsimile form or e-mail form.

31. The order-reception system according to claim 29, further including:

- means for storing, in a storage, Q&A information representing 25 contents of inquiries sent from the customer and the seller and

contents of responses to the inquiries, the inquiries regarding commodities to be sold and supports to be provided; and

means for providing the Q&A information stored in the storage, in response to a request therefor.

5 32. The order-reception system according to claim 31, further including

means for gathering statistical data based on the customer information and customer order information of each of a plurality of customers, and reflecting the statistical data to the Q&A information.

10 33. The order-reception system according to claim 29, wherein the support request information includes information regarding a request for collecting recyclable items including at least one of a used cartridge, a used toner container and used paper.

15 34. The order-reception system according to claim 33, further including

means for arranging collection of used paper, in response to a support request for collecting used paper from the customer when a used-paper collection box provided to the customer is filled with used paper.

20 35. The order-reception system according to claim 29, wherein the support request information includes information regarding a request for at least one of:

a service for delivering the commodity to a place specified by the customer;

25 a service for unpacking the commodity at a time of delivering

- the commodity ordered by the customer;
- a service for collecting an empty box that the customer does not need any more;
- a service for delivering commodities which are repeatedly supplied to the customer on a FIFO basis;
- a service for specifying a delivery date for delivering the commodity to be delivered;
- a service for urgently delivering the ordered commodity; and
- a service for periodically delivering a constant number of commodity specified by the customer.
36. The order-reception system according to claim 29, further including:
- means for registering, in response to a registration operation of the seller, the customer information including information regarding a price of a commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by the seller;
- means for creating a purchase application form and a catalogue based on the stored customer information; and
- means for providing the customer with the created application form and catalogue.
37. The order-reception system according to claim 29, wherein receiving means receives the customer order information through a telephone call or via facsimile.
- 25 38. The order-reception system according to claim 29, further

including

means for receiving the customer order information through Internet.

39. The order-reception system according to claim 38, further  
5 including

means for registering, in response to a customer registration operation of the seller, the customer information including information regarding a price of commodity purchased by the customer with high frequency and a cost of a support requested by 10 the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by the seller,

wherein said means for registering the customer information includes, in the customer information, information representing that the customer is one who transmits the customer order information 15 through the Internet.

40. The order-reception system according to claim 29, wherein said means for determining includes

means for assigning a delivery of the commodity to a service person who can execute a maintenance service when it is 20 determined that the commodity specified in the ordering information is to be delivered, and determining to execute the maintenance service at a time of delivering the commodity, in a case where the customer has made a contract of the maintenance service for one of a plurality of apparatus including OA apparatuses, based on the 25 customer information and customer order information.

41. The order-reception system according to claim 29, further including:

- means for arranging delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information based on the customer order information, upon
- 5 determination of the delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information and the providing of the support; and
- means for instructing a distributor to perform a support when delivering the commodity, in a case where the support is specified in the customer order information.

10 42. The order-reception system according to claim 41, further including:

a stock database which stores stock information regarding commodities;

means for confirming whether there is a stock of the ordered

15 commodity, based on the stock information;

means for determining a delivery date for delivering the ordered commodity;

means for sending, to the customer, order-reception confirmation information including delivery-date information

20 representing the determined delivery date and the customer order information in a facsimile form or e-mail form; and

means for arranging the delivery of the ordered commodity based on the delivery-date information and customer order information.

25 43. A program for controlling a computer to execute the

following steps of:

- receiving customer order information sent from a customer, the customer order information including customer information regarding the customer and at least one of ordering information
- 5 representing contents of an order for a commodity ordered by the customer and support request information representing contents of a request for a support;
- executing an order-reception processing based on the received customer order information;
- 10 determining to deliver the commodity specified in the ordering information and to provide the support specified in the support request information, based on a result of the order-reception processing;
- confirming whether the commodity has been delivered and
- 15 whether the support has been provided; and
- charging a price of the commodity specified in the ordering information and a cost of the support specified in the support request information, based on the customer information including information regarding a price of each commodity purchased by the
- 20 customer with high frequency and a cost of each support requested by the customer with high frequency, wherein the price and the cost are set by a seller of the commodity and support.
44. The program according to claim 43, wherein the program controls a computer to execute further steps of:
- 25 arranging delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering

information based on the customer order information, upon determination of the delivery of the commodity specified in the ordering information and the providing of the support; and

instructing a distributor to perform the support when delivering

- 5 the commodity, in a case where the support is specified in the customer order information.